

Magistrate reduces bond for Lexington man accused of molesting boys

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Baker



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MANSFIELD -- Bond has been reduced for a Lexington man accused of molesting four boys.

William Baker, 57, is charged with a single count of rape, 11 counts of sexual battery, 18 counts of gross sexual imposition, 10 counts of importuning, five counts of sexual imposition and four counts of contributing to the unruliness or delinquency of a child. The last nine counts are misdemeanors.

Baker, who could receive almost 190 years in prison if convicted on all counts, was being held in the Richland County Jail on \$250,000 cash bond. Magistrate Garry Dalbey, in a decision released Wednesday, reduced the bond to \$50,000 cash.

"The magistrate does not have any elevated concern that Mr. Baker is a flight risk," Dalbey said. "Mr. Baker's brother and wife both volunteered to turn in Mr. Baker to police or to the electronic monitoring department if Mr. Baker violates his bond in any manner.

"Bail bondsman Daniel Stratton volunteered to check on Mr. Baker daily to confirm he was still at his residence. These efforts by the family and the bondsman go beyond the norm to protect Mr. Baker and the community, and are a major consideration in the reinstatement's of William Baker's earlier bond."

Dalbey detailed the alleged abuse in his ruling.

"Over a course of years, Mr. Baker inappropriately touched and had (sexual conduct) with four male minor victims," he wrote. "One victim was 10 years old when this conduct began. Mr. Baker bought the boys alcohol before he took advantage."

Dalbey said his biggest concern was that Baker attempted to contact one of the alleged victims.

"Any further contacts or attempts to contact them will lead to an immediate revocation of Mr. Baker's bond," the magistrate wrote.

Defense attorney Jaceda Blazef said the contact happened before Baker's arrest. She said her client has no previous record.

"I think it (reducing bond) was a fair and reasonable thing for (Dalbey) to do," Blazef said.

Assistant Prosecutor Gary Bishop said he would not appeal Dalbey's decision.

"Mr. Baker is sufficiently impressed that fleeing the district or contacting the victims would not be in his best interest," he said.

As of Thursday afternoon, Baker still was in jail. If he posts bond, Baker cannot have contact with Snow Trails, where he previously worked. He also must forfeit his passport.